

VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIL #2434/01 2811037
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 081037Z OCT 09
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5222
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 0151
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 5826
RUEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA// IMMEDIATE
RHMFIUU/HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI//CCPA// IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1458
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 7877
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1874
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS ISLAMABAD 002434

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [OIIP](#) [OPRC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PK](#)
SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: OCTOBER 08, 2009

Summary: Reports that the top Pakistani military leadership expressed "grave concern" over various clauses of the Kerry-Lugar Bill dominated headlines in all newspapers on Thursday. All newspapers also highlighted Prime Minister Gilani's assurance to the National Assembly that the "apprehensions of parliamentarians and armed forces over the legislation would be removed through consensus." Reports of meeting between President Zardari and Prime Minister Gilani to "discuss military's concerns on the Kerry-Lugar Bill" also received extensive coverage. Some newspapers reported that "President Obama has delayed signing the Kerry-Lugar Bill due to criticism on the legislation in Pakistan." However, some major dailies highlighted that the "signing is not delayed" and "President hoped to sign the bill within the stipulated period of 10 days." The English language daily, "The News," reported that "Senator Kerry has planned an emergency visit to Pakistan to address the dissenting voices."

Most major newspapers ran in-depth editorials on the ongoing Kerry-Lugar Bill debate, and its far-reaching implications. Commenting on the Pakistan Army's reservations on the legislation, the prestigious English daily, "Dawn," noted that the Pakistan "army high command has belatedly come around to expressing its concerns and the fact that it has chosen to make its reservations public as opposed to going through private governmental channels is regrettable." However, the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News," wrote: "To be fair to General Kayani and his men, the language of the bill is harsh and unnecessarily crude at various points. A more gracefully phrased piece of legislation would have done everybody good." The liberal Urdu daily "Express," observed that the "Parliament is the most appropriate forum to deliberate vital issues such as the Kerry-Lugar Bill."

In other news, all dailies front-paged reports that the Balochistan High Court ordered registration of a case against former President General Musharraf and other senior officials for killing Baloch leader Akbar Bugti. Reports of killing of a top aide to Swat Taliban leader Fazlullah, carrying a bounty of 10 million rupees, were also highlighted. End Summary.

News Stories

"Corps Commanders Express Concern Over Kerry-Lugar" "Dawn" (10/08)

"The military-government differences on the conditions attached to an aid legislation approved by the U.S. Congress, the so-called Kerry-Lugar bill, became more pronounced on Wednesday after the

army's top commanders, through a carefully drafted press statement, expressed their 'serious concerns' on some of the clauses of the bill that they believe would affect 'national security.' At the same time they asked the government to build a national response on the controversial bill through a debate in the Parliament. Unlike a benign two-line statement that is usually issued after most of the corps commanders' meetings, the one released to the media on Wednesday left absolutely no doubt that the top brass was not only gravely disturbed over the conditions linked to the American aid legislation, they wanted to make their views public instead of just communicating them to the government through a formal channel."

"Political Equation Rocked By Kerry-Lugar Fiasco" "The News" (10/08)

"The Pakistani political equation suddenly took a disturbing turn on Wednesday when differences between the civilian government and the Army high command surfaced over the Kerry-Lugar Bill and shook the national scene. Amid fast-paced developments, which shocked the country, confusion in the government and coalition ranks was evident when Prime Minister Gilani, in a brief address to the National Assembly, offered to build a consensus between the President and the Army, implicitly admitting that things had suddenly changed."

"Certain Individuals Targeted Army, ISI" "The News" (10/08)

"When the top military commanders declared their serious concern regarding clauses of the Kerry-Lugar Bill impacting on the national security, the top brass had knowledge and evidence that a few elements within the government deployed resources to lobby several key United States congressmen for inclusion of anti-military and anti-nuclear program segments in the controversial U.S. aid bill, informed officials said. 'This is actually an attempt to cripple the Pakistan Army and the ISI and it is not the first or last attempt. There are some elements with clandestine job in all this,' said an informed official, who disclosed that Pakistani security officials were constantly getting information from their sources in Washington that illustrated vast difference between the public and private positions adopted by individuals and organizations representing Pakistan's national interest in Washington."

"No Clash With Military Over Kerry-Lugar Bill: Government" "Dawn" (10/08)

"The government rejected on Wednesday speculations about a clash between the military and the civilian government over certain conditions attached to the U.S. Kerry-Lugar Bill. Talking to reporters after a meeting of the federal cabinet, Information Minister Qamar Zaman Kaira said the U.S. assistance should be allowed to come for development of the NWFP and tribal areas which had been badly affected by terrorist activities."

"Gilani Vows To Push Through Kerry-Lugar Bill" "Dawn" (10/08)

"Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani vowed on Wednesday to get all parties in the country on side to accept 7.5 billion dollars in aid from the U.S., as a divided Parliament debated the issue.... 'The government will remove reservations of Parliament and the armed forces, if any, and build a national consensus on the issue,' Gilani, keen to see the aid come through, told lawmakers on Wednesday evening."

"Gilani, Zardari Discuss Concerns Over Kerry-Lugar Bill" "Daily Times" (10/08)

"Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani on Wednesday called on President Asif Zardari at the Presidency and discussed the military top brass' concerns regarding the Kerry-Lugar bill."

"It's Up To Parliament To Decide On U.S. Aid Bill: PM" "Daily Times" (10/08)

"The government is not bound to accept the strings attached to the Kerry-Lugar Bill and Parliament is empowered to take the final decision on the matter, Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani told the National Assembly on Wednesday."

"Obama Delays Signing Kerry-Lugar Bill" "Pakistan Observer" (10/08)

"Obama has delayed signing Kerry-Lugar due to reports of criticism on the bill in Pakistan, a private TV channel reported on Wednesday."

"Bill Signing Not Delayed" "Dawn" (10/08)

"U.S. President Barack Obama hopes to sign the aid to Pakistan bill within the stipulated period of 10 days, the bill has not been delayed, U.S. officials told 'Dawn' on Wednesday. Earlier in the day, the media in Pakistan reported that President Obama had delayed signing the Kerry-Lugar bill because of an adverse reaction in the country."

"Senator Kerry Rushing To Pakistan" "The News" (10/07)

"As opposition to the Kerry-Lugar Bill mounts with reservations expressed by the Pakistan Army, Civil Society and Parliament, Chairman U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator John Kerry, has planned an emergency visit to Pakistan to address the dissenting voices. He will be arriving in Pakistan in a week or so, a credible source in Washington said."

"No Condition Put On Pakistan For \$7.5 Billion Aid" Kerry" "The News" (10/07)

"U.S. Senator John Kerry, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, assured the Pakistanis that the recently passed Kerry-Lugar Bill attaches no conditions to economic aid for their country and has nothing to do with drone attacks or private security firms as being associated with the legislation in the ongoing debate in the media. Kerry, who along with other members of the influential panel, met with Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, described the characterizations as inaccurate. He said the legislation will not impinge on Pakistan's sovereignty. 'There is no conditionality, whatsoever, in this legislation with respect to the civilian assistance and the economic assistance that is provided,' he told newsmen."

"White House Assessing Reaction In Pakistan" "The News" (10/08)

"Top-level behind the scene deliberations began in the White House in Washington on Wednesday to re-evaluate the progress in war on terror with particular emphasis on the situation in Pakistan. In the first meeting held between Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, National Security Advisor James Jones and Secretary Defence Robert Gates the Pakistani reaction over the Kerry-Lugar Bill also reportedly came under discussion. Sources in the White House revealed that the situation evolving in Pakistan on the Kerry-Lugar Bill has put the Obama Administration in an awkward position and a number of key conservative hawks have asked to reassess the U.S. efforts to find enduring partnership with Pakistan."

"U.S. Does Not Intend To Encroach On Pakistan's Sovereignty: Qureshi" "Dawn" (10/08)

"'Those who have questions or doubts should read the legislation, which is very clear in its intent,' says U.S. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton while responding to the criticism that the Kerry-Lugar bill encroaches upon Pakistan's sovereignty. She made these remarks on Tuesday afternoon at a joint news conference with Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi who defended the bill saying that the Americans had 'no intentions of trampling on Pakistan's sovereignty or will the elected democratic government of Pakistan ever allow any compromise on Pakistan's sovereignty.'"

"Aid Necessary For Pakistan: Zardari" "Daily Times" (10/08)

"President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday defended the Kerry-Lugar bill and termed it necessary for Pakistan's economy, saying the aid will benefit the people, not their leaders. According to a private TV channel, Zardari said almost Rs 140 billion would be spent on development projects every year under the bill."

"Zardari Takes It Personally" "The News" (10/08)

"The presidency is convinced that the opposition to the Kerry-Lugar Bill by 'certain elements' is an attempt to de-legitimize Asif Ali

Zardari as President of Pakistan. 'All this is intended to malign Zardari,' presidential spokesman Farhatullah Babar said when approached by 'The News' to know the presidency's viewpoint on the issue. He said the bill did not give an iota of impression that the sovereignty of Pakistan or the supreme national interests had been compromised."

"Army, Parliament, People On One Side, President On The Other" "The News" (10/08)

"Opening the House debate on the controversial Kerry-Lugar Aid Bill, leader of the Opposition Chaudhry Nisar rightly described it as a defining moment in our history. But what was even more defining was the unmistakable dividing line drawn in the sand of our political wasteland, with the President hunkering on one side and the opposition, the army, and the popular will on the other. And while the Prime Minister went through the motions of appearing to be standing in the middle."

"U.S. Energy Coordinator To Visit Pakistan" "Pakistan Observer" (10/08)

"David Goldwyn, the State Department's coordinator for international energy engagement, will lead later this month a government team for a dialogue with the Pakistani Government on energy policy and investment. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told newsmen in a joint appearance with Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi that the U.S. team will focus on addressing Pakistan's chronic energy shortfalls."

"Registration Of Bugti Case Against Musharraf Ordered" "Dawn" (10/08)

"the Balochistan High Court has order the SHO of Dera Bugti Police Station to register an FIR against former President Pervez Musharraf and others in the murder case of Baloch leader Nawab Akbar Bugti."

"Top Aide Of Fazlullah Killed In Swat" "Dawn" (10/08)

"A militant leader Nisar alias Ghazi Baba, carrying a bounty of Rupees 10 million was killed and his son was captured during a clash with security personnel in Matta tehsil of Swat on Wednesday. He was considered a close aide of Tehrik-i-Taliban Swat chief Maulana Fazlullah."

"Focus On Pakistan At White House Meeting" "Dawn" (10/08)

"U.S. President Barack Obama gathered his top military and political advisers in the secure White House Situation Room on Wednesday for discussions that focused primarily on Pakistan, said White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs as the Washington Post noted that one of the proposals being discussed is the 'Pakistan First' theory 'championed by Vice President Joe Biden.'"

"No U.S. Ground Involvement In Tribal Areas, Says Qureshi" "Daily Times" (10/08)

"Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has ruled out the involvement of U.S. ground troops in fighting extremists in the Tribal Areas, saying that Pakistani forces are capable of combating terrorists on its soil, he told CNN in an interview."

"'Tough Resistance' Expected In Waziristan" "Daily Times" (10/08)

"The Pakistani army expects Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters in the South Waziristan tribal region to put up 'tough resistance' against a military offensive, Maj. Gen. Athar Abbas, army's chief spokesman said."

"'Rah-e-Nijat' Operation SWA Later This Month" "The News" (10/08)

"The Army will be launching an operation in South Waziristan codenamed 'Rah-e-Nijat' sometime after mid-October but the militants' supply lines have already been sealed off, informed sources say. An ISPR spokesman would not comment on the exact time frame."

"Taliban Kill Six Men Of Hakeemullah Group" "Dawn" (10/08)

"Afghan Taliban killed six militant leaders of the Hakeemullah Mehsud group for refusing to release two men they had kidnapped. According to sources, the two men, Shahid and Shah Nawaz, had been kidnapped three days ago."

"Six Militants Killed In North Waziristan" "Dawn" (10/08)

"Troops killed six militants and injured two others in a clash in Razmak area of North Waziristan on Wednesday, an official said."

"Anti-U.S. Rally" "The News" (10/08)

"Observing Anti-U.S. Day on completion of eight years of U.S. attack on Afghanistan, the activists of Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba the other day staged a protest demonstration at the University of Peshawar against U.S. interference in the affair of the country."

"WFP Suspends Food Distribution Among IDPs In Malakand" "Dawn" (10/08)

"The World Food Program has suspended food distribution among internally displaced persons (IDPs) in various parts of Malakand division after the October 5 bomb attack on its office in Islamabad that killed five aid workers."

"Foreigners Advised To Restrict Movement" "Dawn" (10/08)

"A number of Foreign Missions in Islamabad have advised their citizens to restrict their movement after a fresh threat of terrorist attacks in the capital, sources in the Interior Ministry and diplomatic circles told 'Dawn' on Wednesday."

Editorials/Op-eds

"Opposing Kerry-Lugar," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (10/08)

"The debate on the Kerry-Lugar bill's 'conditionalities' is inching worryingly towards becoming a debate about national security versus democracy.... All sides, though, must bear some of the blame. While it is the government's executive prerogative to negotiate such aid with foreign governments, domestically it failed to keep all the various stakeholders in the loop, consult them frequently and get their input. The government does not appear to have realized that politics and the law intersect on matters such as the Kerry-Lugar bill.... Army high command has belatedly come around to expressing its concerns and the fact that it has chosen to make its reservations public as opposed to going through private governmental channels is regrettable.... Right or wrong, wise or unwise, the Bill must not become the basis for fresh cleavages between the army and the political opposition on one side and the government on the other. The national security-democracy debate is not an either/or issue - national security can and must be protected through the democratic process. Even by Pakistani standards, it is too soon to forget the damage caused by extra-constitutional interventions."

"Towards Confrontation," an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (10/08)

"The civilian government and the military are now quite openly at odds over the conditions included in the Kerry-Lugar Bill.... To be fair to General Kayani and his men, the language of the bill is harsh and unnecessarily crude at various points. A more gracefully phrased piece of legislation would have done everybody good.... The President, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister have all strongly defended the Kerry-Lugar Bill as a triumph of their policies and called on members of their party to back it. But what they have failed to acknowledge is the impact of the bill on Pakistan's sovereignty and the fact that it will strengthen the idea that the U.S. is dictating terms. As always happens when rifts open up, there are elements at work who seek to exploit them. We can see this happening today. The need is for rationality and good sense to kick in. Pakistan would benefit from the Kerry-Lugar Bill and the aid offered under it, but portions of it could do with a redraft."

"Kerry-Lugar Bill And NRO: Parliament Is The Best Forum," an editorial note in the liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir.25,000) (10/08)

"One solution to the army's reservations about certain conditions would be to out-rightly reject this assistance and to meet the military's expenses through national resources. The other solution would be to talk with the U.S. to review such [controversial] conditions.... We also need to dispel the impression that there are misunderstandings between the army and the government just because of U.S. aid.... The U.S. is not doing Pakistan any favor by giving this aid; in fact the losses we have faced due to the war on terror are far more than the aid provided by the U.S. and its allies. Let the parliament discuss the issue; it has the right to turn down this aid if it comes to the conclusion that certain conditions included therein mean compromising on national sovereignty. Parliament is the most appropriate forum to deliberate vital issues such as the Kerry-Lugar Bill."

"Brawling Over Kerry-Lugar Bill," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (10/08)

"Prime Minister Gilani is proclaiming the bill a 'big success' of his 'democratic government' and is ready to defend Pakistan's acceptance of the American aid in parliament. His strong points are, the bill is not addressed to Pakistan but to the Obama administration, the money it allows to Pakistan is not a loan but a grant, the conditionalities do not apply to social sector aid and that Pakistan needs the money because it can't get it from elsewhere.... Pakistan is getting \$7.5 billion, and its stock exchange is already responding to prospects of economic stability as seen by foreign capital after the Kerry-Lugar Bill."

"Kerry-Lugar Bill: PM's Stance And Army's Concern," an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (10/08)

"The country's armed forces have hinted at unacceptability of the KL Bill and they also informed American General McChrystal about it. The situation demands that the Bill should not only be discussed in the National Assembly, but in the joint session of the Parliament.... The nation cannot accept the aid that has been arranged after compromising the national security."

"Kerry-Lugar Bill: How Important Is Consensus?," an editorial in the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder" (cir. 25,000) (10/08)

"Senator John Kerry, the architect of the legislation, told reporters after he and other members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee met visiting Foreign Minister Shah Mahmoud Qureshi that 'no conditions' have been imposed, the Secretary of State is also required to make an assessment of how effective a control the government is exercising over the military, including oversight and approval of defence budgets, chain of command, promotion of senior commanders and civilian involvement in strategic planning.... It would be unfortunate if this bill (Kerry-Lugar) was to divide the nation. The government and opposition should use the forum of the National Assembly to hammer out a consensus on the issue."

"Kerry-Lugar Bill: Consensus Needed," an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (10/08)

"The Kerry-Lugar Bill has been taken up in the National Assembly and Corps Commanders meeting. The opinion expressed at the two forums should be given a high level review in order to reach a national consensus decision. The Parliament can reject the bill, but if it does not do so then the bill's opponents should review their own attitudes."

"NRO, KL - NA Is Proper Forum," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (10/08)

"In the present-day context the issues of NRO and Kerry-Lugar Bill have become subjects of heated debates and deserve to be critically examined by the Parliament. NRO is fundamentally flawed one-man legislation imposed on the nation, which is perceived to have jolted

the very moral fabric of the society.... Similarly, acceptance of the humiliating conditions of the Kerry-Lugar Bill are, generally speaking, perceived to be bartering away of national sovereignty. The ignominious conditions and degrading observations should not be acceptable to any self-respecting nation at any cost.... We hope that the debate would be result-oriented, giving clear-cut direction to the Government on how to proceed further on the controversial issue."

"Superficial Discussion On The Kerry-Lugar Bill: U.S. Should Remove Doubts," an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Din" (cir. 10,000) (10/08)

"While the nation is focused on the controversial clauses in the Kerry-Lugar bill, the government is also concerned about unhindered movement of Americans in the country. This concern touched the extreme when illegal arms were recovered from security agencies linked with the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan.... Instead of peddling the Kerry-Lugar bill in the marketplace, [the government] should get the help of experts in international law who can review it threadbare. Subsequently, if a clause is found to be against our sovereignty, an alternative viewpoint can be presented to the U.S.... Pakistani apprehensions about the activities of the Americans as well as the Kerry-Lugar bill need to be allayed."

"Objections On The Kerry-Lugar Bill And Democratic Government's Responsibility," an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Waqt" (cir. 5,000) (10/08)

"We hope that that the Pakistani leadership would neither ignore national sovereignty nor emulate a military dictator in kowtowing to the U.S.... We hope the leaders would give ample time to the parliamentarians to study the bill in the national assembly and would not force them to act as a rubberstamp."

"Where's The Partnership?," an op-ed by Tariq Fatemi in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (10/08)

"It is an irony that the U.S. remains deeply unpopular even with those states that have been the greatest beneficiaries of its assistance.... The bill (Kerry-Lugar) has generated several misgivings even among those (Pakistani) who favor cordial relations with the U.S.... The conditions are much too onerous and impractical. The U.S. should appreciate that an aid package viewed as demeaning defeats the very purpose for which it is crafted.... The Kerry-Lugar bill is likely to generate fresh controversies and sour relations as its primary message is that the U.S. views Pakistan as incompetent, corrupt and unreliable, with assistance being provided only because it is a 'critical task.' There is no reflection on partnership between the two. Instead of hailing the bill as a great success, the government should have pointed out the pitfalls and expressed its reservations early on as vigorous and timely lobbying could have improved its provisions."

"The Same War Hysteria," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (10/08)

"President Barack Obama's remark on a recent visit to the National Counter-terrorism Centre (NCTC) in Virginia that he could not rule out Al-Qaeda attacking the U.S. in the future recalls the same war hysteria that his predecessor George W. Bush created and kept trumpeting during his two dismal tenures.... One would hope that Obama restrains himself from following this course if he wants to make sure that he does not meet a similar fate."

"American Double-Standards," an editorial in the Lahore-based populist center-right Urdu daily "Khabrain" (cir. 50,000) (10/08)

"U.S. President Obama has said that Al Qaeda hideouts around the world, including Pakistan, will be targeted. Meanwhile, U.S. State Department spokesman has said that most of the 9/11 perpetrators have crossed into Pakistan.... How does the U.S. know this? And if they have reliable information, why is it not shared with Pakistan? Similarly, it has been proven that no Pakistani was involved in the 9/11 attacks; the U.S. is implicating Pakistan just to achieve its nefarious designs.... The government should protest at this statement."

"Afghanistan Conundrum," an op-ed by Mohammad Jamil in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (10/08)

"There is no industry to create employment opportunities to the jobless, and no serious effort has been made by various governments to promote agriculture. This leaves the unemployed at the mercy of militants who look after them better than the state because of their income from drug-trafficking. During the last eight years, warlords had a free hand in drug-trafficking under American and NATO forces' watch. Afghanistan is facing death and destruction for the last three decades.... The question is why the U.S. and the West do not realize that they can no more run the world according to their whim and fancy. And why don't they understand that other countries have the right to live according to their own way, their own faith and their own culture.... The U.S. has spent more than one trillion dollars on Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and if it had spent half of this amount on improving the lives of the people in Afghanistan and other underdeveloped regions, it was possible to reduce poverty, crimes and extremism in the world."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Patterson